

Message

From: Newton, Cheryl [Newton.Cheryl@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/16/2021 8:38:52 PM
Subject: Acting RA Weekly (Sent to All R5)

Dear Region 5,

National Hispanic Heritage Month started this week. You can read President Biden's proclamation [here](#). This month we recognize and celebrate the many contributions of Hispanic Americans have made to the history, culture, and achievements of our country. Hopefully you saw my message earlier this week regarding the upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration on September 21, 2021, hosted by the Region 5 Office of Civil Rights, the Hispanic Employment Program and the American Indian/Alaska Native Employment Program. Administrator Regan also sent out an [email](#) this week with details on the celebratory event hosted by Headquarters.

September is also Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness on this difficult topic and share vital information to those affected by suicide. One way to help prevent it is to talk about it; having open conversations about mental health and emotional struggles helps reduce the stigma – which is what prevents a lot of people from seeking the help they need. If you have lost a loved one to suicide, the impact can be intense and overwhelming. Know that you don't have to cope alone. Talk to a caring professional or join a support group to help you heal and move forward. [EPA's employee assistance program](#) offers a variety of resources covering health, wellness, financial, resilience and emotional well-being. You can schedule an appointment with a counselor 24/7.

Moving to program news, last week, EPA received a petition for immediate EPA assistance in Benton Harbor, Michigan due to elevated lead levels in the community's drinking water. A team from many parts of R5 and HQ has been working quickly to gather information from EGLE and evaluate the existing conditions and programs to determine what additional steps are needed. I'd like to thank the team including **Valerie Bosscher, Andrea Porter, Ryan Graydon, Tom Mendez, Candice Bauer, and Debbie Baltazar** from **WD**, **Jonathan Moody, Victoria Anderson, Taylor Girouard, Beth Murphy, Nefertiti DiCosmo, and Carolyn Persoon** from **ECAD**, **Jacqueline Clark, Karen Peaceman, and Randa Bishlawi** from **ORC**, and **Alan Walts** from **ORA**. Their efforts have been invaluable, especially as several of us joined Radhika Fox and others in meeting with the petitioners on Wednesday to hear more of their concerns first hand.

With our growing emphasis on community engagement, I want to highlight this week's webinar entitled, "Air Permit Public Engagement Training" co-sponsored by Region 5's Air Permits Section (APS) and WDNR. The webinar covered important public participation topics such as environmental rule development, facility-specific permit review considerations and how community organizations and public participation can impact environmental outcomes. The 2 half-day workshop was attended by over 50 participants from the local community and other Wisconsin stakeholders. Although this was the first of its kind in Wisconsin, WDNR and Region 5 plan to offer more events that build upon these fundamental concepts as we continue to foster our state, local, and community conversations and engagement related to air permitting. The APS also plans to work with other permitting agencies to offer similar events to additional Region 5 states and communities. Thanks to **ARD's Michael Cloyd, Jennifer Darrow, and YeChan Lim** for all your hard work in pulling this webinar together.

There was good press this week about a complaint and consent decree filed by DOJ/EPA and the State of Michigan, alleging several CAA and State law violations at the Arbor Hills Energy LLC (AHE) landfill gas-to-energy facility (facility) in Northville, Michigan. AHE has agreed to significantly reduce, if not virtually eliminate its sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from the facility to resolve the alleged violations, including exceedances of the facility's permitted SO₂ emission limits. Under the settlement, by March 2023 AHE will either construct a renewable natural gas facility that converts landfill gas into pipeline quality natural gas and would virtually eliminate SO₂ emissions or install a sulfur treatment system that achieves a 64 percent reduction in SO₂ emissions. Additionally, AHE also will pay a civil penalty of \$750,000, split equally between the United States and the State of Michigan. Great job to the case team: **Daniel Heins (ECAD), Vicky Mei (ECAD), and Andre Daugavietis (ORC)**.

Also this week I signed the Mid-term Report for our Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA) with IDEM. This report provides a status update on all the activities and joint priorities in the PPA. Thanks to **LCRD's Martha Robinson, Kimberly O'Lone, and Allen Melcer** for coordinating the report. The divisions have also been working closely with IEPA on finalizing their new PPA which should be coming up for my signature in the next week or so. This was a reminder to me that we are constantly in the cycle of planning together to achieve goals, doing the work, assessing progress as well as finding opportunities for improvement with each of our 6 states and 35 tribes. Thank you to everyone who helps us manage all these planning cycles!!

I want to welcome **Heather Shoven** into her new role as the Deputy Director of LSASD. Heather is moving from WD where she has served as the Ground Water Drinking Water (GWDW) Section Chief and recently completed a virtual detail as Associate Branch Chief in OGWDW's Drinking Water Protection Branch. Please join me in congratulating Heather on this new position. I want to thank **Genevieve Damico (ARD)** for stepping up as the Acting Deputy Director as we worked through filling this position. Keeping with LSASD, Region 5 hosted a transition meeting for the Lead Region role between Regional Labs and ORD from R5 to R3 on Thursday. It was a great yet informal conversation about our past 2 years' experience, what worked well and lessons learned that may help R3 succeed in its vision to continue the work establishing the NPM and this Lead Region program. Many thanks to George Schupp and Lead Region Coordinator Chris Choi for supporting this important discussion. I also participated in ORD's meeting with OMB this week as part of the FY23 budget process.

We are quickly approaching the end of FY21, which means that End-of-Year PARS are just around the corner. To assist you in those discussions with your supervisor, I encourage all of you to prepare a written self-assessment with your year-long achievements and growth. This will help your supervisor remember the range of work you've accomplished and be aware of the barriers you overcame. These discussions are a two-way conversation; not only to gain feedback on the past year, but to also discuss career goals, needs, and interests. Good preparation for your meeting will help make your conversation more valuable. Here are some articles that can help you prepare:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/10-performance-review-preparation-tips-11610125896>

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5379-writing-self-assessment.html>

As we enter the second half of September, be sure to log onto [FedTalent](#) to make sure that you've completed all your mandatory trainings. Our goal is to have all Region 5 complete mandatory training by September 30th. The Region is currently at 88.01% completion. There's still time to make your division home to Traveler; the next report will be run on September 22nd.

It's looking like beautiful weather this weekend; I hope you get a chance to get out and enjoy it – perhaps in between baseball and football games!! Have a safe and enjoyable weekend.

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